

About the Bureau

The mission of KDHE's Bureau of Air and Radiation is to protect the public from the harmful effects of air pollution and prevent damage to the environment from releases of air contaminants. The bureau strives to achieve this mission through monitoring, permitting, planning, education, and compliance activities. These activities are conducted by four sections of the bureau and four local agencies. The bureau also carries out a comprehensive radiation protection program.

Air Construction Permit Section

Air Construction Permit Section staff receive and review construction permit applications for emissions sources to ensure that they minimize the release of air contaminants and meet all requirements. The applications range from approvals in cases where proposed emissions are relatively small to Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) permits where facilities with substantial emissions are being constructed or modified. The Unified Government Health Department assists in the permitting process by issuing construction and operating permits in Wyandotte county.



Photo by Doug Watson, KDHE

Air Operating Permits and Compliance Section

The section processes operating permit applications for facilities requiring either Class I or Class II operating permits. Class I operating permits combine all applicable air quality requirements in one permit to clarify for both the facility and the public what is required to comply with the air pollution regulations. Section staff also use a combination of educa-

tion, technical assistance and formal enforcement actions to ensure facilities subject to the air quality regulations comply with applicable requirements. Staff from KDHE's district offices and the four local agencies conduct inspections and forward the results to the compliance section for review and response. When a source violates an air quality requirement, the staff works with the facility to correct the problem or, in severe cases, takes formal enforcement action.

Monitoring, Inventory and Modeling Section

The Air Monitoring Section staff work with three local agencies to operate an air monitoring network that provides air quality data from 25 sites around the state. The data is analyzed to determine compliance with federal standards and to evaluate air quality trends. Staff members also conduct an annual inventory of pollutants emitted from permitted facilities and other sources for the entire state. The section also utilizes monitoring and emission inventory information to conduct air quality modeling to evaluate the effectiveness of air pollution control strategies in areas such as the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Asbestos, Right-to-Know & Radiation Section

The Radiation Control Program includes two program areas. The environmental radiation surveillance program has the purpose of detecting, identifying, and measuring any radioactive material released to the environment resulting from the operation of Wolf Creek Generating Station and radioactive materials and X-Ray control. The radioactive materials and X-Ray control program regulates the use of ionizing radiation in Kansas. The asbestos program in this section monitors the removal of asbestos from building renovation and demolition projects and issues licenses to asbestos workers to ensure trained personnel conduct removal activities. The Right-to-Know program receives information regarding chemical storage and releases.